



**Department of  
Education**

*Richard A. Carranza, Chancellor*

May 10, 2019

**Memorandum**

To: Tamra Collins  
Superintendent, CSD #23

From: JoAnn C. Rabot  
Director, Office of Appeals and Reviews

Subject: Discontinuance of Probation for Andrew Ringel, File #898453, teacher of Special Education, PS 156

Although the attached advisory report indicates majority non-concurrence for the discontinuance, the Chair recommends concurrence.

I have reviewed the file and the proceedings of the Review and concur with the minority (Chair) recommendation due to the Probationer's number of violations of Chancellor's Regulation A-420.

As you are the Superintendent of record, please prepare the appropriate letter to Mr. Ringel and forward a copy to this office so that we can close the case.

JCR:me

Communication-Privileged/Confidential

**The New City Department of Education  
Office of Appeals and Reviews  
65 Court Street  
Brooklyn, New York 11201**

## **Review of a Recommendation to Discontinue Probationary Service.**

**Appellant:** Mr. Andrew Ringel  
**Title:** Special Education  
**School/Office/Bureau:** P.S. 156K  
**Rating Period Ending:** October 4, 2018

**File No:** 898453  
**Superintendent:** Tamra Collins  
**District:** 23  
**Rating Officer:** Naiyma Moore-Allen

**Chancellor's Committee:**

\*Stephen V. Hinds, Chairperson  
\*\* Dr. Gerald Brooks, Committee Member  
\*\*Jacqueline Singletary, Committee Member

**Date of Review:**

May 6, 2019

**Committee's Recommendation:**

\*Minority Concurrence with the recommendation to discontinue probationary service for the Probationer effective October 4, 2018.

\*\*Majority Non-Concurrence with the recommendation to discontinue probationary service for the Probationer effective October 4, 2018.

**Background Data:**

Ms. Naiyma Moore-Allen, Principal and Rating Officer of P.S. 156 Waverly, District 23, recommended the discontinuance of the services of Mr. Andrew Ringel, hereafter referred to as the Probationer. Superintendent Tamra Collins, affected such a recommendation, effective October 4, 2018. The decision arrived at by the Administration resulted from violations of Chancellor's Regulation A-420 during the 2017-2018 School Year.

Documentation presented, along with the oral presentations of: the Rating Officer, Assistant Principal, Ayesha Lamont-Agard, and Superintendent's Representative, Marianne Alvarez, spoke to the following:

- The Probationer came as an open market transfer to P.S. 156K for School Year 2017-2018 and assumed the assignment of a special teacher in an ICT 4<sup>th</sup> grade setting. During this period, the Probationer established a pattern of violation of Chancellor's Regulation A-420.
- The Probationer received a letter to file dated 3/8/18 for violating Chancellor's Regulations A-420, on 12/2/2017 and 2/2/2018, by pushing Student A, pulling him out of the classroom, and hitting or pretending to hit Student A. The regular education teacher, in this instance, was caused to intervene and hold the Probationer away from Student A.
- The Probationer received a second letter to file dated 4/9/2018 for violating Chancellor's Regulations A-420 by grabbing Student A by the hoodie on 2/9/2018.
- The Probationer received a third letter to file for violating Chancellor's Regulations A-420, by pushing and grabbing Student A "on or about 2/2/2018 and 2/6/2018".
- The Probationer received a letter to file (the letter was removed at procedural objection) that spoke of the Probationer bringing a snake to school without the consent of the Administration and failing to inform the Administration when the snake went missing. The snake was never found.
- The Probationer received a letter to file dated 5/9/2017 for engaging in professional misconduct by interrupting and speaking over facilitators at a professional planning and a professional development session on 4/20/2017 and 4/24/2017 respectively.

The UFT Advisor, Mr. Stanley Sorongon, and the Probationer, argued that the decision to recommend the discontinuance of the Probationer's service was unfair for the following reasons:

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- The Probationer has been a teacher with the DOE for three years; two of such years were spent at P.S. 195X where he received end-of-year ratings of "Satisfactory" and "Effective" respectively. The Probationer also received an end-of-year rating of "Effective" from P.S. 156K for School Year 2017-2018.
- The Probationer decided to transfer to P.S. 156K because his travel to P.S. 195X took over an hour and P.S. 156K was close to where he lived. His assignment at P.S. 156K was that of a special education teacher in an ICT setting, with a general education teacher and a paraprofessional who was assigned to a specific student.
- Most of the allegations preferred against the Probationer for the 2017-2018 School Year, were investigated by Assistant Principal Lamont-Agard. All of the substantiated allegations against the Probationer involved the same student who was verbally and physically abusive to the Probationer throughout the 2017-2018 School Year. These alleged incidents took place when the student was either abusive to staff or students.
- Throughout the 2017-2018 School Year, the Probationer sent emails to the Administration concerning the behavior of Student A, who was removed from the classroom for one day and then returned. Student A, at one point, threatened the Probationer's life. Student A was known to have thrown books and pencils at the Probationer and on one occasion called the Probationer "a stinky ass" and a "fucking Jew".
- The Probationer, in addition to reaching out to the Administration, reached out to Dean Haynes and the school social worker for assistance but received little help from them. The Probationer also met with Student A's mother who expressed dislike for the Probationer and showed little cooperation in addressing her son's situation.
- The Probationer brought a snake to school as a way to enhance students' learning. The Administration was aware that there was a snake in his classroom along with other pets.
- The actions the Probationer assumed in addressing the behavior of Student A were in keeping with the guidelines set down in Chancellor's Regulations A-420. He believes that the actions by the Administration towards him, in return, were retaliatory in nature.
- The Probationer submitted into evidence anecdotes that spoke of his involvement with Student A during School Year 2017-2018.

The Rating Officer, and the Superintendent's Representative, Ms. Marianne Alvarez, summated for the Administration. The Rating Officer repeated her claim that her decision to recommend the discontinuance of the Probationer was predicated on the number of violations of Chancellor's Regulations A-420 by the Probationer. The Rating Officer acknowledged that Student A had behavioral issues. According to her, the school had several meetings with Student A's mother to address his behavior. The Rating Officer accused the Probationer, however, of engaging in inappropriate behavior towards students. She said that such behavior was witnessed by adults, who considered such behavior unbecoming a professional. The Rating Officer referenced one occasion where a student had to be taken from school by ambulance and NYPD was called because of the action meted out by the Probationer. The Rating Officer, in response to the Probationer's claim that the Administration was aware he had a snake in his classroom, refuted the claim and stated that she was only made aware of such when the custodian informed her that the snake had gone missing. The Rating Officer concluded by describing the Probationer as one who is a detriment to children.

The Superintendent's Representative, when given the opportunity to summate, continued to support the decision of the Superintendent to discontinue the Probationer from service with the DOE effective 10/4/2018.

The UFT Advisor, Mr. Stanley Sorongon, and the Probationer, summated on behalf of the Probationer. The Advisor repeated his claim that the Probationer had received positive end-of-year ratings for each of his three years of service as a Probationer. He noted that the recommendation to discontinue the Probationer was not based on the Probationer's pedagogy but solely on the alleged violations of Chancellor's Regulations A-420 that generated letters to file for incidents involving the same student. The Advisor accused the Rating Officer of failing to address the concerns voiced by the Probationer with reference to Student A. He also accused the Rating Officer of making statements that were untrue and slanderous towards the Probationer. The Advisor concluded by requesting that the recommendation to discontinue the Probationer from service with the DOE be withdrawn.

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The Probationer, speaking on his own behalf, noted that he had received four observations for School Year 2017-2018 and had received three Effective ratings and one rating of Developing in the area of class management.

**Findings:**

The Chancellor's Committee took into careful consideration all documents and oral presentations put forth at this Review. The Majority members of Chancellor's Committee felt that the Administration's decision to discontinue the Probationer from service was too severe. They found the Administration to be lacking in aggression in removing Student A from the Probationer's classroom, despite the behaviors exhibited by Student A during the 2017-2018 School Year that generated the number of recorded A-420 violations. The Minority member of the Committee, on the other hand, found that there was not enough compelling evidence presented by the UFT Advisor or the Probationer to recommend a reversal of the Administration's decision to discontinue the Probationer from service with the DOE effective October 4, 2018. It is therefore the recommendation of the Majority members of the Committee that the discontinuance of the Probationer be withdrawn; and it is the recommendation of the Minority member of the Committee that the Administration's decision be left undisturbed.

**Procedural Objections:**

The following procedural objections were offered during the course of this Review:

**Objection # 1:**

The Advisor objected to Documents # 17.0 – 17.1 and # 19.0, on the grounds that the Probationer had won an arbitration to have such documents removed from his file.

**Response:**

Documentation presented by the Probationer supported the Probationer's claim. Documents # 17.0 -17.1 and # 19.0 have been removed from the packet submitted by the Administration.

**OBJECTION SUSTAINED.**

**Objection #2:**

The Advisor objected to Document # 23.0 on the grounds that the Probationer had won an arbitration decision to have this document removed from his file.

**Response:**

There was no proof provided by the Advisor or the Probationer that such a document should be removed. Document 23.0 will therefore remain in the packet.

**OBJECTION DENIED.**

**Objection # 3:**

The Advisor objected to document # 24.0 – 24.26 on the grounds that it did not require the Probationer's signature.

**Response:**

Document # 24.0 -24.26 is a log of assistance. The Probationer, when questioned, admitted to being familiar with the contents of the document in question.

**OBJECTION DENIED.**